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AUTHOR Odo, Carol
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ABSTRACT

The underlying assumptions of the study described in this report are that language change in process is revealed through language variation and that variation is rarely random. With these two ideas in mind, the author studies the presence of "r" in Hawaiian English and considers its appearance in various environments. The study also investigates whether the variation in the pronunciation of "r" correlates with extralinguistics factors such as social class, age, education, sex, style, and interviewer. Tables illustrate the findings on the variations. There is an indication that a change toward adoption of a more standard American pronunciation--at least for syllabic "r"--has been in process in Hawaii for some time. A firm pattern of variation emerges from the data. (VM)

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VARIATION IN HAWAIIAN ENGLISH: UNDERLYING R

Carol Odo

Introduction

At the end of last summer's (1970) field methods seminar, (Ling. 630), Professor William Labov presented a list of "Provisional Findings Made and Problems Defined." In the phonology section of this list he states that:

> Creole is r-less. By contrast with mainland dialects, or NNE, we find no support for underlying /r/ when the next word begins with a vowel. A characteristic C phonetic feature is the open vowel [ɐ] in unstressed -er syllables. This is symbolized as neva and ova in dialect writings.

and raises the following questions:

> Is this [ɐ] therefore distinct from [ə] proceeding from words like sofa and pajama? Is there any basis for underlying /ɪ/ in length or vowel quality? Does the fact that pronouncing r in these unstressed -er syllables is a prominent mark of E shift[2] mean that a knowledge of /r/ is preserved in C?

Since Labov's seminar a project was undertaken to deal directly with both his statements and questions regarding r-lessness in Hawaii.

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[1] Prepared originally for Professor C.-J. Bailey as a term project in Linguistics 635. December 14, 1970. I am indebted to Prof. Bailey for his help in bringing this paper to its present state.

[2] E shift means use of a more standard American pronunciation.

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The purpose of this paper is to expose the interesting facts that have been the yield of this project.

The underlying assumptions upon which this project is based are that:

1. Language change in process is revealed through language variation; that is, X will go through a period of variation with Y before changing categorically to Y.

2. Variation is rarely random; it is systematic, and its patterning is conditioned by both intra- and extra-linguistic factors.

The Speech Community. For the native or immigrant population of Hawaii, three levels, or co-existent systems, have been set forth by Tsuzaki (1970):

1. Hawaiian Pidgin (HP), serving as a contact language.

2. Hawaiian Creole (HC), the native language of subsequent generations: an English-based creole.

3. Hawaiian English (HE), which shows the fundamental grammatical structure of mainland English.

Data for this project is limited to the speech community, viz. those born and raised in Hawaii who have immigrant ancestors. All informants showed

both "Creole" and "Hawaiian English" levels in their speech.

Hypotheses. Three phonological variables were originally chosen: dh--voiced interdental fricative, th--voiceless interdental fricative, and r. Unforeseen difficulties which appeared later in the study made it necessary to exclude the first two. The variable r here refers to the syllabic and semi-nuclear //r// found in pre-consonantal and final positions. Exploratory data gathered early in the project showed rich variation, with apparently consistent use of the variable by different speakers.

The following hypotheses were made concerning the variable r:

1. a) Underlying //r// exists in the grammar of Hawaiian English; b) the norms of the speakers here are the same as those of speakers in "r-less" areas of the mainland that have been investigated.

2. Percentage of r-lessness covaries with: a) social class--lower classes will be more r-less; b) age--older speakers will be more r-less; c) education--less educated speakers will be more r-less; d) sex--men will be more r-less than women;

e) style--the least formal speech styles will be the most r-less; f) interviewer--an informant will be more r-less with a local interviewer than with a mainland haole[1].

Some Revisions of the Hypotheses. Preliminary analysis of the data indicated underlying //r// in HE, answering affirmatively Labov's question, "Is there any basis for underlying /r/ in length or vowel quality?" To speak further of the presence or absence of r is somewhat misleading. We are really concerned with the phonetic feature sulcal[2] or a grooved articulation which characterizes standard American non-nuclear r and also syllabic and semi-nuclear r in "r-ful" varieties of American English. This feature distinguishes the foregoing from the nuclear or semi-nuclear /ə/ found in "r-less" areas of Standard English--notably in New York, eastern New England, and the Deep South.

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[1] Non-pejorative local word meaning Caucasian or "white man".

[2] According to Bailey (personal communication) all high vowels, r, ɜ, and ɚ are sulcal.

The following feature complexes are assumed for non-nuclear and sulcal nuclear //r//:

Syllabic	Semi-nuclear	Consonantal
+nuclear	+nuclear	-nuclear
+syllabic	-syllabic	(-syllabic)
+central	+central	+central
+sulcal	+sulcal	+sulcal

Only those vocalic r's in preconsonantal and prejunctural positions will be referred to in this study.

Methodology

Informants. All informants except one were selected on the basis of their local background. The one exception is at first glance a fluent speaker of Hawaiian English, who did not come to Hawaii until age eighteen, although she has lived here over thirty years. There is little difference in her treatment of the variable. Although only two of the fourteen informants are male, these two cases somewhat substantiate the second hypothesis. It was difficult to assign social class to the informants, although whether they have ever lived in low-cost housing projects has been taken note of. See Appendix Table A.1 for detailed information on informants.

Elicitation of Data. Since one of the hypotheses concerns the covariation of style and the use of sulcal r, it was necessary to elicit different speech styles varying in degrees of formality. The classification of style used here is similar to that which Labov established for his study of New York City English.

> Style A: Ideally, unmonitored speech among family or close friends; informant usually not aware of being recorded.
>
> Style B: Informant aware of being recorded and trying to bring his performance to the level of his norms.
>
> Style C: Reading style; informant is asked to read several paragraphs.
>
> Style D: Minimal pairs; not really a speech style but the informant's consciously monitored report of his norms.

Style B was the least formal style elicited from most of the informants. This was the interview situation, in which they were informed of the linguistic nature of the interview and were encouraged to talk about themselves, their neighbors, and other lively things.

Style C was the most formal speech style. Two reading tests were devised for this project. One was a fill-in-the-blank type, consisting of sixteen

sentences with a single blank per sentence. The other was a short plotless anecdote, as if narrated by a twelve-year old. The separate fill-in-the-blank test was made on the assumption that the informant's concern for filling in the right word would minimize his monitoring of the rest of the sentence, and subsequently result in a speech style somewhat less formal than the usual reading test. But this turned out not to be true and the results of both tests were averaged as Style C.

Style D, the minimal pair test was not a speech style, but the informant's report of his norms, as already observed. Note that all minimal pairs used here were also embedded in both Style C reading tests.

See Appendix Tables A.2a, A.2b, and A.2c for a sample set of the reading tests and the list of minimal pairs.

Data Analysis

After the various speech styles had been recorded, transcriptions were made of up to fifteen minutes of casual (Style A) or informal (Style B) speech--whichever was available. In some cases

both styles were recorded and comparisons were made. It was evident from the beginning that the feature [sulcal] always appears in two environments: first, in non-nuclear r, and second, with the exception of two informants, as the central, accented, syllabic segment in such words as first, perfect (adj.), and nurse. The same unaccented segment within the same word becomes variably [-sulcal]; e.g., ['phɝfik], [ph ə'fɛkʃən].

All semi-nuclear r's were then marked on transcription sheets for sulcality and two percentages were calculated to indicate this--one on the basis of the total occurrences of underlying //r//; another, on the basis of the total number of different words which contained underlying //r//'s. For example, within a given fifteen minutes of speech in a given style, an informant might exhibit thirty occurrences of r in four different words, or else thirty occurrences of r in thirty different words. In any case, the differences between the two calculations never exceeded ten per cent, and it was evident that the percentage of total occurences gives a better indication of [sulcal] variation.

The same procedure was followed for the reading and minimal pair tests (Styles C and D); again, only the first percentage was used in the final analysis.

Underlying //r//: Hypothesis 1a. That an underlying //r// exists in Hawaiian English is fully substantiated by the data. We find that r is invariably sulcal when non-nuclear (eg., the r in rat) or accented and syllabic, but variably non-sulcal when semi-nuclear,or syllabic and unaccented. Sometimes there is compensatory lengthening of the vowel nucleus as a phonetic realization of //r//.

The following forms represent a single speaker (Tammy) within a single style:

more: [mo], [mɔ̃], [mo^{ə}], [mo^{ɚ}]

there: [ðe], [ðē], [ðe^{ə}],

year: [yɪ], [yi^{ə}]

This range of variation appears complex at first. In fact, all phonetic forms are systematic and rule-governed. It seems that the longer forms--those with glides--are accounted for by either primary word accent or emphatic (semantic) stress. The

four environments listed below govern the phonetic realization of underlying //r//:

Environment I[1]: syllabic accented vowel, eg., worse.

Environment II: syllabic unaccented vowel, e eg., bother.

Environment III: a) semi-nuclear satellite of a stressed vowel; b) the same segment in a semantically unstressed position. Excerpts from a taped interview may help clarify the difference between (a) and (b):

Interviewer: Get small kind plants.

Lorraine: No more[2] [mɔ̃]. Env. IIIa.

....

Lorraine: No more [mo] nothing for do. IIIb.

Table 1 below reflects environments and corresponding realizations of //r// for Tammy a thirteen-year-old. She was interviewed first by Tony Gillies, a haole who looks and speaks 'mainland,' and a week later by myself, a local Japanese. It is immediately apparent that Tammy used far more

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[1]The minimal pair test did not include words within Environment I.

[2]'There aren't any.'

sulcal r's when being interviewed by him than when being interviewed by me. The percentages also indicate that, while the adoption of [sulcal] is complete in Environment I, a line between Environments II and III cannot be firmly established.

Table 1. Tammy: Phonetic Realizations of //r// in Two Interviews

Env.	I'ver[1]	No. of Occurrences	Percentages of ɜ/ɝ	ə	V	0[2]
I	A	7	100	--	--	--
	B	19	100	--	--	--
II	A	31	50	--	--	50
	B	18	14	--	--	76
IIIa r following:						
i	A	2	50	50	--	--
	B	2	--	100	--	--
e	A	13	16	60	20	14
	B	5	--	80	--	20
a	A	10	40	--	40	20
	B	10	10	--	80	10
ɔ	A	1	--	--	100	--
	B	2	--	--	50	50
o	A	11	50	--	18	32
	B	10	10	30	--	60
u	none					

[1] Interviewer A: Gillies; B: Odo.

[2] Environment IIIb.

In connection with phonetic realizations of r, it should be noted that the open-o word class is rather neatly split off from the closed-o class. With very few exceptions, speakers used closed-o followed by either a sulcal or non-sulcal glide only when not followed by a tautosyllabic consonant; eg., more, four, before. Open-o is used before //r// followed by a tautosyllabic consonant (eg., short, port); here, the vowel is not followed by a glide.

In the class of words containing //ar// as in yard, garden, it was difficult to ascertain whether the vowel was followed by the central non-sulcal glide ə̲ . Possible cases of this occurrence are not differentiated from cases of vowel length in Tables 1 and 2.

Analyses of two other informants show a similar pattern. Joyce is twenty-eight years of age and Edith is thirty. Table 2 shows only the presence or absence of the feature [sulcal], with finer distinctions such as vowel length omitted.

Table 2. Use of r in Three Environments

Env.	Inf.	No. Occur.	% +sulcal
I	Joyce	12	100
	Edith	23	100
II	Joyce	14	56
	Edith	30	80
III r following:			
i	Joyce	5	40
	Edith	4	--
e	Joyce	5	20
	Edith	4	50
a	Joyce	5	40
	Edith	4	--
o	Joyce	5	20
	Edith	12	25

Use of sulcal r is greatly favored by Edith in Environment II. While it is only slightly favored by Joyce in this environment, [+sulcal] in Environment II still predominates over sulcality in Environment III. Environment I, as expected, shows 100 per cent [+sulcal][1].

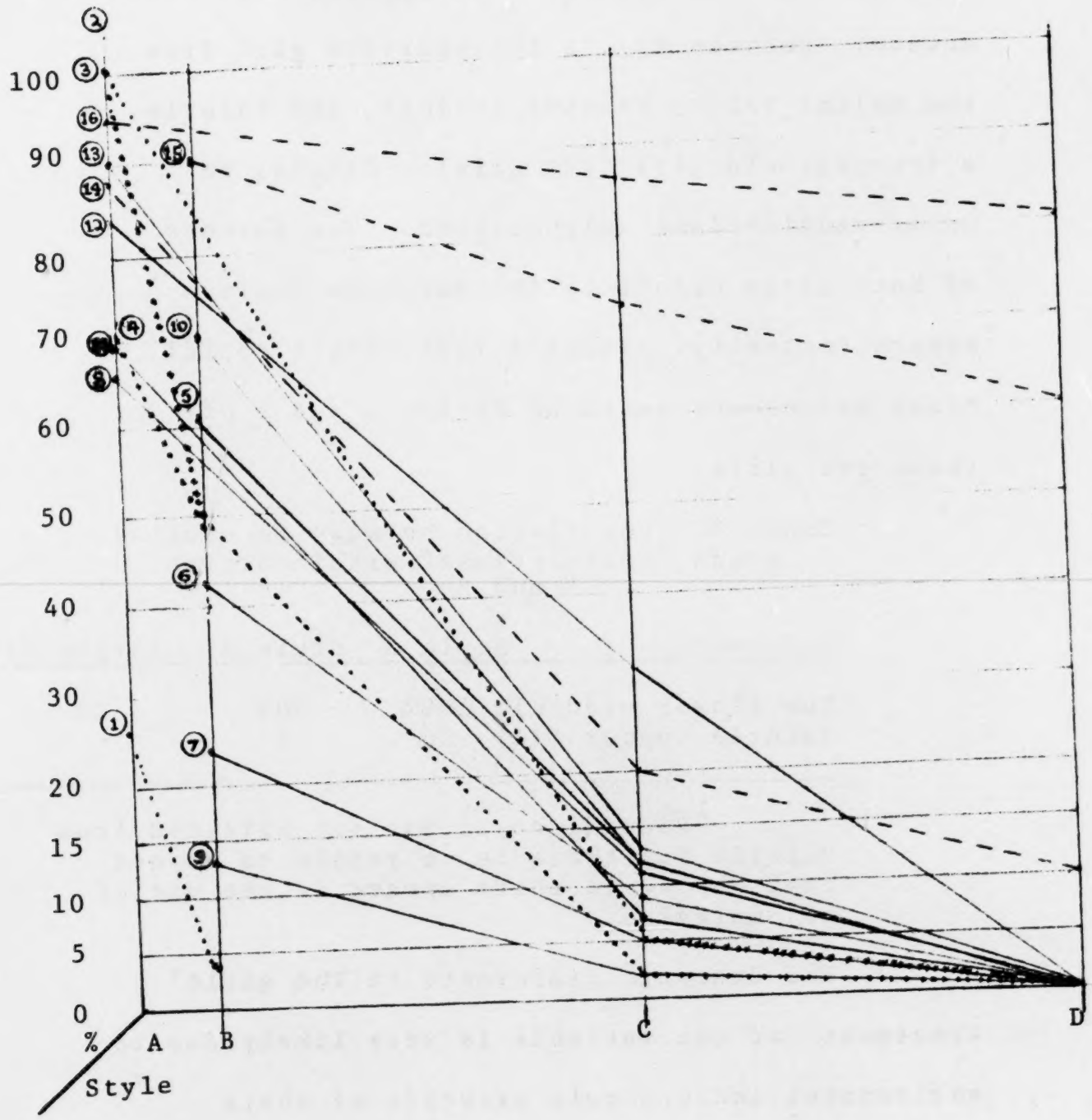
[1] In recent work with three and four-year old children, I found that sulcal r is well established in Environment I. On the other hand, non-nuclear sulcal r--not a variable in adult speech--lags somewhat behind; in words such as cream, radio, rat, r often alternates with w. This preliminary observation is supported by word repetition test which I administered.

Norms: Hypothesis 1b. There is no doubt that the norms of the speakers in the Hawaiian English community are the same with respect to sulcal as those of speakers of "r-less" mainland dialects.

If we assume that the prestige or newer form would, as Bickerton (MS) states, "...enter only the formal end of the spectrum and spread gradually form there," and that sulcal r is the prestige form now emerging in Hawaiian English, its heaviest use would be found in the most formal style, the minimal pair test (Style D). In fact, results of the minimal pair test show that informants are not only in general agreement in their norms regarding r, but that all those below the age of fifty make 100 per cent minimal pair distinctions. In other words, they are invariably "r-ful" in this style, which represents their monitored norms. Also, all informants show a similar downward shift from a comparatively high "r-lessness" in Style A or B to a lower percentage in Style C, and to an even lower percentage in Style D. This is illustrated as Figure 1.

Figure 1. Showing use of non-sulcal r for all informants in all styles. Circled numbers identify informants as listed in Table A.1. A general age classification is made as follows:

···· 13 and under
---- 50 and above
____ other



Hypothesis 2: Percentage of "r-lessness" or Use of Non-sulcal r Will Covary with:

a. Social Class. No attempt was made to assign social class to the sixteen informants, since, with only two exceptions they share the same general background. A comparison was made, however, between Sue, a ten-year-old girl from the Kalihi Valley Housing Project, and Valerie, a ten-year-old girl from Waialae-Kahala, an upper-middle-class neighborhood. The parents of both girls belong to the Hawaiian English speech community. Table 3 indicates a social class difference based on Styles A and B of these two girls.

Table 3. Covariation between Non-sulcal *r* and "Social Class" within Styles A and B

Informant	Style A	Style B	(Style C)[1]
Sue (lower middle)	100%	50%	2%
Valerie (upper mid)	26	4	-

[1]Reading style was not elicited from Valerie but there is no reason to expect that she would shift upward in the use of non-sulcal *r*.

The dramatic difference in the girls' treatment of the variable is very likely due to environment and economic prestige of their families, which is expressed here as social class.

It is at this point that we are forced to question the validity of speech styles A and B as given earlier. The writer has found that informants react quite differently to the interview situation, and that this causes difficulty in assigning either Style A or Style B to a fifteen-minute stretch of speech. In a conversation with an informant who was unaware of being taped, a transcription of one fifteen-minute section of the tape might show close to 100 per cent use of sulcal r, while the next fifteen-minute section might show something like sixty per cent use of the feature. Technically both are Style A, since the informant is talking among family and friends.

Obviously, many personality factors as well as mental attitude are involved in speech. Shifting "upward" when talking about serious or technical things can be expected, although this certainly is not a constant. The echo effect[1] (Bickerton, MS) also operates in varying degrees depending on situation and

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[1] "The tendency for speakers in a conversation to unconsciously influence one another's behavior..."

individual[1].

The best that can be done in this study would be either to minimize the distinction between Styles A and B, or else make impressionistic judgements on the basis of my own membership in this speech community, knowing that either alternative would be far from satisfactory.

Using these somewhat fuzzy guidelines, speech styles for Sue and Valerie were determined as follows:

In Style A, Sue was talking with her sister and brothers, fully aware of the tape recorder; in Style B she was being the interviewer, with microphone in hand, asking the other kids questions like:"What is your name?" "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" Some of these questions were being read from a questionnaire, so this may be an intermediate style lying somewhere between B and C.

Valerie, in both styles, was sitting with the tape recorder in her lap, alternately telling a story into the machine and talking

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[1]I used to think that I never style-shifted when talking to my dog, but this, as I discovered later, is not the case.

with her cousins. Telling the story is classed as Style B; the other is regarded here as casual speech or Style A.

Although the reader may question the validity of substantiating a hypothesis on the basis of two informants, other recorded data show that Sue is--in casual speech at least--representative of her peer group. Another informant used in this report shows 100 per cent non-sulcal _r_ in Style A; she is ten years old and lives in a rural community on the island of Kauai. Other data not used here also confirm this. While no recordings were made of other children in Valerie's neighborhood, personal observations indicate that she is quite representative.

Age. While use of sulcal _r_ is fairly constant for all ages in Style A/E, a significant correlation can be made between age and degree of Style formality, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation of Style and Age in the Use of *r*

Informant	Age	% non-sulcal r Style A/B	C	D
Mr. Q	61	95	87	80
Mrs. Q	53	88	20	10
Mrs. G	53	90	73	60
Elsa	35	90	14	0
Edith	30	85	32	0
Joyce	28	70	12	0
Amy	28	69	7	0
Shirley	19	61	12	0
Tammy	13	70	--	--
Sue	10	100	2	0
Lorraine	10	100	5	0

The first three informants are the oldest, and notably, they make fewer than 100 per cent minimal-pair distinctions. Mrs. G and Mr. Q especially show high percentages of non-sulcal *r*. They are also the only informants in this study that show an incomplete acquisition of sulcal *r* in Environment I, i.e., in words such as *first*, *girl*. They use the non-sulcal central vowel *ə* in about fifteen per cent of total occurrences in this class of words. Correspondingly, there is a significantly low percentage of non-sulcal *r* in Style C for speakers under fifty years of age, with the lowest percentages reflecting the youngest speakers. This means that younger speakers use more sulcal *r*'s.

Education. Better-educated speakers were expected to exhibit fewer non-sulcal *r*'s. Data presented in Table 5 support this hypothesis.

Table 5. Correlation of Educational Level with the Use of *r*

Name	Education	Style	% non-sulcal A/B	C	D
Joyce	Hi Sch.		70	12	0
Shirley	Hi Sch.		61	12	0
Blossom	Col. Jr.		42	9	0
Lydia	BA, Educ.		23	5	0

Sex. Labov's (1966) study of New York City English indicated a clear leading margin of women over men in adoptionoof prestige pronunciations. The same was expected in Hawaii. The results confirm this hypothesis, although the amount of data is a bit scant. Two men were interviewed, but fortunately the same data from the wife of one and the girl friend of the other are available for meaningful comparison. Also, Alan is Mr. Q's son.

Table 6. Sex and the Use of *r*

Name	Sex	Style	% non-sulcal A/B	C	D
Mr. Q	M		95	87	80
Mrs. Q	F		88	20	10
Alan	M		06	11	0
Lydia	F		23	5	0

Style. Covariation between non-sulcal *r* and informality of style is shown as Figure 1 (page 15), as well as in other tables. The shift from informal to formal style is consistently downwards in "r-lessness" as expressed in Figure 1; in terms of "r-fulness" it is consistently upwards.

Interviewer. That the informant's evaluation of the interviewer would have considerable effect on his speech was another supposition which was tested. In his "Provisional Findings, Labov (1970) states that "Hawaiian (non-haole) adults from twenty to sixty appear to possess a reasonable command of English which they use in formal situations, especially with strange haoles." The one informant who was interviewed by both a local non-haole and a mainland haole was Tammy, whose phonetic output of *r* is discussed in an earlier section. Refer to Table 7.

Table 7. Up-shifting in the Presence of Strange Haoles (Tammy)

Interviewer	% non-sulcal
Local	70
Strange Haole	48

Tammy's shift from seventy to forty-eight per cent non-sulcal r is not unlike Sue's shift from Style A to B--100 to fifty per cent (see Table 3). Because of this parallel Tammy's higher percentage is entered as Style A, and her lower percentage as Style B, in Figure 1.

Conclusion

Results of this study lend support in varying degrees to all the hypotheses underlying it. Additionally, there is a strong indication that a change toward adoption of a more standard American pronounciation--at least for syllabic r--has been in process in Hawaii for some time. Table 5 (Correlation of Age and Style in the Use of r) is the more suggestive since it includes informants from various ages and socio-economic backgrounds. Not only does a firm pattern emerge from the data, but implications as to the nature of the speech community can be drawn. When change affects speakers representing both HC and HE in the same way, perhaps the linguistic situation in Hawaii can be better expressed as a continuum than as separate levels or systems. Further studies

of phonological and grammatical features are needed, in any case, to fully support either position.

Other tables which show covariation of *r* with extra-linguistic factors no doubt suffer from limited data, but none of the hypotheses is disconfirmed; all are confirmed to some degree.

Data from a single speaker, Tammy, provided a rich area of study in itself. The high degree of variation and the striking regularity of this variation indicate one semantic and three phonetic environments which favor or disfavor the use of sulcal *r*. These are:

Environment I: syllabic accented vowel, eg., *worse*; [sulcal] is almost invariable here.

Environment II: syllabic unaccented vowel, eg., *bother*; [sulcal] used slightly more here than in Environment III.

Environment III: a) semi-nuclear satellite of a stressed vowel: the *r* in *four* is usually realized as sulcal, non-sulcal, or vowel length; b) the same segment in a semantically unstressed position: both vowel

nucleus and satellite are reduced in function words such as <u>for</u>, <u>or</u>.

Finally, the close correlation between up-shifting and formal style, as shown in Table 7 and Figure 1, suggest that the future of Hawaiian English lies safely in the hands of mainland haoles.

Appendix

Table A.1. Description of Informants.

		Race[1]	Age	Educ.	Born and Raised	Misc.
1.	Valerie	M	10	5th grade	Honolulu	HE, "upper middle class"
2.	Sue[2]	M	10	5th grade	Honolulu	HC, daughter of Joyce
3.	Lorraine	M	10	5th grade	Kauai	HC
4.	Tammy[2]	M	13	8th grade	Honolulu	HC
5.	Shirley[2]	M	19	high school	Honolulu	HC/HE
6.	Blossom	C	20	college junior	Honolulu	HE
7.	Lydia	C	23	BA, Educ.	Honolulu	HE, school teacher, girlfriend of Alan
8.	Alan	J	24	college senior	Honolulu	HE, son of Mr. and Mrs. Q
9.	Peggy	P/H	27	high school	Honolulu/ mainland	No HE characteristics in interview
10.	Joyce[2]	P	28	high school	Honolulu	HE/HC, mother of Sue, daughter of Mrs. G
11.	Amy	M	29	high school	Kauai	HC/HE
12.	Edith	Hw	30	high school	Maui	HC/HE
13.	Elsa	P	35	high school	Kauai	HC/HE
14.	Mrs. Q	J	53	junior high	b. mainland raised Japan	lived Hi past 30 years, HE
15.	Mrs. G[2]	P	53	junior high	Honolulu	HE, parents immigrants
16.	Mr. Q	J	61	college	Honolulu	HE, parents immigrants

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[1]P-Portuguese, J-Japanese, H-Haole, Hw-Hawaiian, C-Chinese, M-Mixed.

[2]Past or present residence in urban housing project.

Table A.2a. Reading Test: Fill-in-Blanks.

1. "Dark Shadows" is a good _____ program.
2. The tuna boats returned home with lots of _____.
3. It's true that God created all men _____.
4. A lot of _____ are smoking pot today.
5. Taking part in community activities is _____.
6. It's a lot of bother to own a dog because you have to take it for a _____at least once a day.
7. John wouldn't dare go to school without his _____.
8. There were a lot of people on the dock when the USS America _____.
9. In Hawaii Don Ho is a popular _____.
10. Today butter costs a lot more than _____.
11. Cats don't like to have their bellies _____.
12. The National Guard was called in to stop the _____.
13. Bill wants a stereo tuner for his _____.
14. "Darn it," said Jane as she watched the bus _____.
15. Port Moresby is the largest _____ in New Guinea.
16. There are lots of beautiful _____ in Hawaii.

Table A.2b. Reading Selection.

Last Thursday I was walking around the dock looking for this tuna boat that my brother works on. It was about 5:30 in the afternoon and it started getting dark. I looked around a whole hour and still couldn't find the darn boat so I asked this guard who was standing there by the wall. "Hey, you know if the fishing boats came into port yet?" I asked him.

"Good God!" he said, "why you bother me? Who you looking for anyway?"

Well I figured something must be bothering the guy, so I told him that my brother's name was Don, but I didn't dare tell him anything else. Like Don used to be a piano tuner but gave all that up when he got busted for smoking pot; he even gave up his girl Karen. He thinks fishing is a better life. You're with real people and earn your bread and butter with real work. Out there it's too big for small petty things.

Table A.2c. Minimal Pairs.

Don--darn	god--guard
dock--dark	there--dare
tuna--tuner	pot--port--part
bother--butter	

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